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MEMORANDUM FOR THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE

SUBJECT : SWIE 11-54: Likelihood of General War through 1957

REFERENCE: Memorandum for DCI from Executive Secretary, NSC, 19 January 1954, Subject, "Intelligence Estimate of Soviet Intentions"

BACKGROUND

1. SWIE 11-54 was initiated in response to a request from the NSC (reference memorandum) for an intelligence estimate to support NSC 159/4, the NSC paper on "continental defense".

SUBSTANCE

2. There are no major unresolved issues in connection with this paper. The following points may be raised, however:

a. General Porter may propose revisions (unknown to us) of parts of the text. In any case he probably will wish to insert a footnote to paragraph 5 similar to one which he has appended to paragraph 2 of NIE-99, as follows:

"1/ The Deputy Director for Intelligence, The Joint Staff, considers that the intelligence available is insufficient to permit a judgment, of Soviet capabilities or intentions, sufficiently accurate to justify the conclusion that:

'Deliberate initiation of general war by the USSR is unlikely during this period'."

b. Some sentiment may still exist for an even briefer paper without any argument supporting the statements in paragraph 5 concerning the likelihood of general war. While there was no great difficulty in getting agreement on the statements in paragraph 5, there was much reluctance

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on the part of all agencies to try to formulate a more detailed statement of the supporting arguments on which these general conclusions about the likelihood of war are based. Paragraphs 3 and 4 of the present text have been inserted largely at the insistence of the Board and in the opinion of the Board, represent the bare minimum of argument necessary for this paper.

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RSC:PAB:le

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